



The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

A Newsletter of the American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountain Region

Servant Offerings

ABCRM staff will be offering monthly ideas and reflections on the state of the church, new ideas or opportunities and other pertinent issues in this monthly column in an effort to better serve our churches and leaders. Your response and input on these articles will be appreciated as always.

Rethinking the Invitation

Steve Van Ostran, Executive Minister

My introduction to church began when I was just a toddler and at the end of the “Revivalistic” period of the American church. By this I mean that it was an age when in Baptist churches, every service ended with an invitation... not an invitation to consider a different way of thinking about a passage or issue in our world that is more common today... but an invitation to accept Christ as Savior and Lord. For some churches, this is still common, but in most I’ve been in, it is given without the real expectation that someone will come down the aisle and pray the sinner’s prayer!



In the church I grew up in, pastors were evaluated on that. Baptisms were THE measure of success, followed closely of course by the number of people in the pews ... or in my childhood tradition, the number of people in Sunday School. Cynically, I might suggest that the financial success of the organization may have had more of an impact on this emphasis than did the church’s concern for the souls of the lost. I pray that’s a bit of revisionist history on my behalf.

Whatever the reason, invitations were important to Baptist congregations in the sixties and seventies. They seem less so now.

But maybe that shouldn’t be the case. Maybe we need to reintroduce the spirit of invitation to our churches. No, not the same spirit of the ‘60’s and 70’s; not the return of the 15 verses of “*Just As I Am*” to the standard order of worship! But a return of invitation in the Biblical spirit of the word as displayed by the likes of Andrew, the Samaritan Woman and even Peter. A spirit of “*Invitation*” focused more on “*Introduction*” than on conversion.

You see, as I read the gospels, Andrew and the Samaritan woman focused on simply introducing people to Jesus. Andrew introduces his brothers and the boy with the loaves and fishes and the Samaritan woman told her whole village

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“Come and meet a man who told me everything I ever did!” Even after Jesus’ ascension, Peter invited people at Mars Hill to get to know the “Unknown God” that they already worshipped.

And so I wonder what would happen if we, both individually and corporately, refocused ourselves on *inviting people to get to know Jesus...*(the Jesus you already know and love), rather than engaging in a theological argument with someone about what they should or shouldn’t believe? I wonder if we focused on telling our favorite Biblical stories about Jesus would help the world to better understand the Good News that we are called to proclaim: That God loves this world and the people that make it up so very much, that God became flesh and lived among us so that we might know we are loved.

I know. Like you most of my friends are already Christians, so this may not seem that important. But let me give you this invitation: Why not have a discussion this week with those church friends about what stories you would tell someone to introduce Jesus to someone who doesn’t already know Him (know Him, not know about Him). Then, if by chance you do get the opportunity to meet someone who might benefit from being introduced to Jesus, you’ll already have the story ready to tell. Think of it as your “Elevator Speech for the Faith”!

Culture Shifts Should Invite the Church to Pause

A Reflection on Skye Jethani’s Lecture with a Challenge to the Churches

Over time the culture shifts and what was once important or central to people’s lives becomes less relevant. Two main culture shifts in American society today are there is no more social pressure to attend church and the younger generation tends to be anti-institutional. The current culture shifts should invite each church to reflect on the ministry they are doing. Skye Jethani quot-



ed Dallas Willard who said, “Your systems are perfectly designed to produce the results you are experiencing.” The system that was in place relied on people coming to the church for help, assistance, community, healing or love, but now people do not rely on the church for those things. Culture shifts should invite the church to rethink the system they are using and add to or create a new system to love and serve people where they are, which may not be in the church.

In Skye Jethani’s book, “With,” he talks about five ways of living your faith: life under God, life over God, life from God, life for God, and life with God. Life under God is about controlling God through one’s submission and acts for Him. Life over God is giving God authorship of one’s life, yet he or she still controls his or her life. Life from God makes one’s relationship with God like a vending machine; in other words God exists to be used. In response to the consumerist approach of a life from God, life for God is activation. Meaning, people exist to be used by God. As you reflect on these four, I challenge you to recognize which one you tend to live through. Skye Jethani would argue none of these are the solution to one’s relationship with God, but the most important thing for God’s children to have is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Skye Jethani desires that followers of Jesus Christ have a life with God. The goal of life with God is intimacy with God. The essence of what we are called to is communion with God.

If each follower’s desire is intimacy with God, what can the church offer its members and community? What ways are you engaging the people in your community who continue to wrestle with

anti-institutionalized forms of worship? Instead of seeing the lack of societal pressure to attend church as a negative thing, see it as an opportunity to authentically engage your community. I desire for each of you to reflect on what you are offering to your church members and community.

There are five main growth

areas I believe the church should be offering its community and congregation: engagement with Scripture, serving others and one another, having a meaningful spiritual relationship, prayer, and fellowship. A culture that prioritizes intimacy with God should have the church to reflect on the systems it is using, and see if a new system could be added to or replace the current system in use. Remember the most important thing is allowing people to come to know Jesus Christ. It is not about the success on a Sunday morning, but more importantly teaching others how to have a life with God to show their community God's love.



*Lauren Parliament
Camping Intern*



The Sweet, Sweet Spirit in That Place *(Gathering Worship Service)*

"Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him In His mighty firmament!; Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!"
Ps. 150:1 and 6 (NKJV)

As we arrived at Father Dyer United Methodist Church on the evening of September 28, we found the praise team in their places and ready to lead the congregation in praising the Lord. Their voices and

instruments were tuned up and ready to ignite the hearts of all who had gathered to praise God on that occasion. The Spirit of the Lord filled "the sanctuary". As the visible body of Christ entered the sanctuary, we were invited to join in with the praise and worship team in giving glory to God!! Wow!! The setting had been established for all who entered the sanctuary to have a powerful Spirit filled experience with the Lord!! The invitation to enter into the presence of the Lord as one body in Christ filled the atmosphere!! Through the response of those assembled before God's face, it was evident that "the Presence of the Lord" was in our midst!!



As our time together unfolded, one could sense that there was a "Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place". And, it was clear that it was "the presence of the Lord". As I looked about the sanctuary, I saw saints fully engaged in praise and worship!! Wow, that was an overwhelming worship experience!! The power and presence of the Lord in our midst was continuously made clear through the praying, preaching, teaching and purpose of our worship experience. Indeed, there was a "Sweet, Sweet Spirit" in that place, and "I know it was the Spirit of the Lord". To God be the glory!! Amen.

*Rev. Larron D. Jackson, DMin
Ministry and Mission Coach
Denver Cluster*



*Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran
brings the Word.*

Gospel Flourishes on the Frontlines of Tension

In the midst of the tension that seems to dominate the headlines from the Middle East, God is clearly at work on the frontlines of nations so often defined by their religious division and sectarian violence.

Recently, I was honored to join a team of American Baptist pastors, directors, and representatives who visited both Lebanon and Egypt in order to discover firsthand the missional efforts of Christians in the Arab world. What we discovered is that from the bustle of Beirut to the famous and fertile fields that adjoin the Nile River, the otherwise marginalized church is sharing the Gospel in a remarkable manner. Although each country faces its own particular challenges, the unequivocal message is that God continues to demonstrate his love on the spiritual frontlines of nations often equated with hostility towards Christians.



In the lush hillsides of Lebanon that rise like granite sentries above the coastal cities, a new type of sanctuary has emerged – a haven for those displaced by Syria’s brutal civil war. Despite Lebanon’s official closure of its borders, Syrian refugees continue to enter through the more porous

locations along the Syrian mountains and to seek shelter in places such as Baalbek and Riyag. Through the charitable efforts of the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD), however, local churches have been able to respond to the physical, emotional, and social needs of Syrian refugees.

Ravished by war and scarred by the ugly face of Islamic fascism, Syrian refugees have often lost family members and relatives in their precipitous escape from that war-torn nation only to discover a sense of cultural isolation in Lebanon. LSESD and its partner organi-



zations help these disenfranchised migrants to learn new skills and to establish a sense of normalcy in the otherwise chaotic rhythm of life. For example, on the outskirts of Baalbek, women learn sewing skills and produce clothing to sell in neighboring villages. In a one-room “tent” school among rows of fruit orchards, a teacher helps displaced Syrian children to resume their education. In an adjacent town, a local church has built a community center next to a refugee camp in which Syrian teenagers were recently engaged in Bible studies and innocent childlike conversations – a return to a sense of normalcy.

Although the projects are too numerous to detail, Christian Arabs in Lebanon have overwhelmingly responded to the humanitarian needs of their neighbors in an expression of sacrificial love. However, this extraordinary effort (and the subsequent growth of Lebanese churches) doesn’t come without a sense of past heartache. In the confluence of parties that were engaged in Lebanon’s civil war (1975-1990), Syrian fighters were among those who, at times, inflicted injuries and heavy casualties upon Lebanese citizens.

In fact, a life group and Syrian pastor for Resurrection Church in Beirut, Rev. Assaad Touma, said in reference to a Christian woman’s concern, “How can I pray and sit next to someone who I have long considered to be the enemy? Someone who may have killed a loved one years ago? The answer is that I have to learn to love and to forgive.”

The result is a demonstrative revival in Lebanon. Very few ghostly reminders of that long civil war still exist today. Occasionally, the skeletal remains of a bullet-riddled building can be spotted, but it stands in stark contrast to the white veneer of newer



apartment complexes and storefronts. More importantly, the war-weary hearts of the Lebanese people are undergoing a spiritual transformation. In the heart of militant-controlled neighborhoods, lively-and-crowded churches and missional projects have taken root. Muslims who have been deterred by the violence of Islam have discovered the unconditional love offered by Christians, and communal partnerships have developed among the two groups. Numerous Muslims have converted to Christianity, and in Islamic dominated towns, some have even chosen a public baptism despite the risk of possible retaliation from Muslim family members and acquaintances. Lebanon exists today as the only bastion of relative freedom in the Arab world as it is the only nation in which a person can officially change his or her religious registration (which has allowed many Muslim converts to study at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut).

A similar, yet regionally distinct, revitalization also has occurred in Egypt. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring and its subsequent revolution to overthrow the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood organization, a number of Muslims and Christians have formed casual alliances in order to pursue a semblance of peace and prosperity. For example, in Al Minia, a hotbed for Muslim-Christian violence, Christians strive to create more economic opportunities, including their support of a home-based clothing manufacturer. Local churches also strive to

build better community relationships by providing educational and medical services in the numerous small, unofficial –



and impoverished – villages that have begun to pop up across the Nile River valley.

The greatest testimonial evidence, however, might exist in the Christian conversion of former Islamic militants and members of terrorist organizations

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who have repented from their errant ways. As one such man said, who must now disguise himself as a handyman in order to enter churches (due to the threat of Muslim retaliation), “God is at work, transforming hearts in the Middle East. We don’t forget our heritage, but we go by a different title – Christian Arabs. God is at work, indeed!”

*Brian Keithline
Aurora Hills Church*



Cave Church Worship



Village Church

*The American Baptist Churches
of the Rocky Mountains*
Invites you and your spouse or guest
to attend a

**“Thank You”
Luncheon
for ABCRM Retired Clergy**

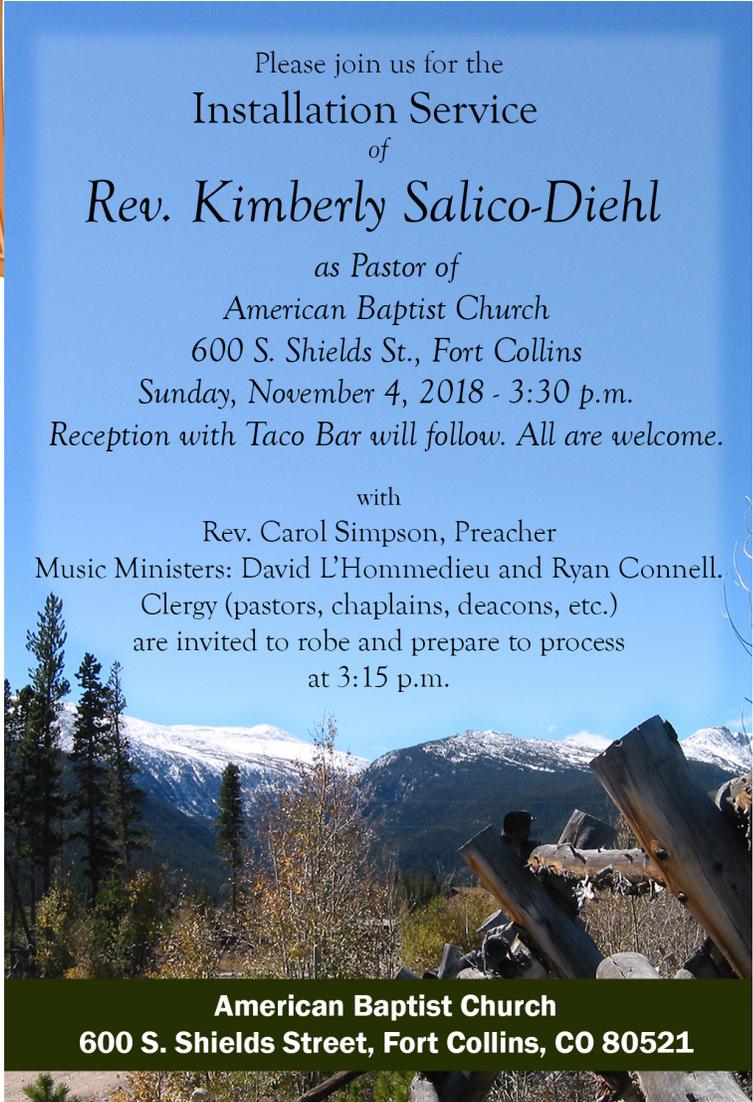
on
Tuesday, November 13, 2018
at
12:30 pm
at
Cinzetti’s Italian Restaurant
281 W. 104th Ave.
Northglenn, CO 80234

*Please RSVP by
November 2*
to
office@abcrm.org or 303.988.3900




Please join us for the
Installation Service
of
Rev. Kimberly Salico-Diehl
as Pastor of
American Baptist Church
600 S. Shields St., Fort Collins
Sunday, November 4, 2018 - 3:30 p.m.
Reception with Taco Bar will follow. All are welcome.

with
Rev. Carol Simpson, Preacher
Music Ministers: David L’Hommedieu and Ryan Connell.
Clergy (pastors, chaplains, deacons, etc.)
are invited to robe and prepare to process
at 3:15 p.m.



American Baptist Church
600 S. Shields Street, Fort Collins, CO 80521

Anxiety Season



Every fall, TV commercials for flu vaccines ubiquitous. At one time only the young, elderly, and immune suppressed were encouraged to get a flu shot. Today, almost everyone is encouraged to get one.

Well, it is “anxiety season” in the church. Anxiety, in this context, is a catch all for stress, conflict, fear, financial concerns, herding, blaming, quick-fix mentality, and many others. Like many viruses, anxiety can spread through congregations rapidly and with devastating results. Anxiety can spread by human contact and through the air. Once this virus hits a congregation, like a person who has the flu, all work stops, and everyone feels horrible.

One resource that helps pastors deal with the anxiety virus is the *Clergy Clinic* which is offered by Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. This three-part workshop helps pastors examine the emotional process they learned in their family of origin and how it impacts the way they deal with the emotional process in the congregation they serve. *Clergy Clinic* is based on the research and writing of Murry Bowen and Edwin Friedman.

Clergy Clinic does not guarantee that a pastor will not catch the anxiety bug. *Clergy Clinic* equips pastors to be in a healthier (differentiated) position when dealing with anxiety. (Richardson, 2004, p. 101) Through this training, pastors are able to be less reactive to the resistance, sabotage, and scapegoating that occurs in high anxiety congregations. (Steinke, 2006, pp. 33–37)

Clergy Clinic is a three-part workshop that is offered every year. The three, three-day sessions are offered

in the fall, winter, and then spring. While an excellent resource it is not cheap when you include three trips to Chicago and the cost of the workshop. Fortunately, pastors in ABCRM churches can apply for a scholarship which will help cover the cost of this training.

For more information: <https://lmpeacecenter.org/events-page/clergy-clinic/>

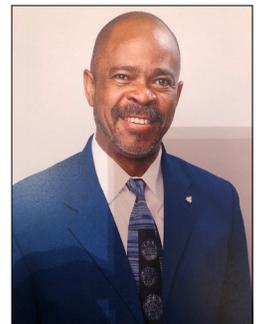
If you want some of the information, but cannot participate in *Clergy Clinic*, read *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times* by Peter Steinke.

Mike Oldham
Ministry and Mission Coach

From Special Ops to Kingdom Service

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”
Eph. 6:11-12 (KJV)

We live in a world today where safety and security must be an integral part of our planning as we gather to worship and praise God. However alarming as this may sound, it is a reality in the world in which we live. We must have people in “kingdom service” that are committed to and know



how to keep saints safe as we gather to participate in kingdom service and to experience the power and presence of God in our lives.

At True Light Baptist Church in Denver, CO there is such a person employed in kingdom service. His name is John Noble. (Wow!! What a name for kingdom service!!) He is the Chief Security Officer of True Light Baptist Church. At first glance Mr. Noble appears to be just another well-dressed, physically fit man in the church. He is polite, warm and welcoming to all who enter the building. However, beneath that calm and welcoming

exterior, is a wealth of “real life experience” in the area of safety and security. Without going into great detail regarding Mr. Noble’s



background in security, let me simply say that, he has served in the military of The United States of America, on both domestic and foreign soil and has a very extensive background in security. In matters of security, while serving our nation, he has never failed. Enough said about that matter.

Mr. Noble is responsible for developing and implementing the safety and security plans for the well-being of all who enter True Light Baptist Church. He carefully selects and trains all members that are a part of True Light’s security team. Behind his calm and placid exterior, beats the heart of one who is committed to walking in the word, way and will of God as he seeks to keep all safe who gather at True Light for kingdom service. True Light is blessed to have such a man of God serving in such an important position as we seek to advance the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ in the world today. Thank God for John Noble!!! Amen.

*Rev. Larron D. Jackson, DMin
Ministry and Mission Coach
Denver Cluster*

Pastor Profile Fred Dyer

Trinity Baptist Church in Douglas, WY has been serving its community for around 30 years. For the last 17 ½ of these years, Fred Dyer has served as its pastor with the able assistance of his wife Deanna. Fred and Deanna celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in August 2017.

Fred didn’t start out to be a pastor. His professional career was spent in personnel work. He worked for several years in workforce development for the state of Wyoming. Then during the Wyoming uranium boom, he worked as personnel director for a

uranium mine. Finally, he was the labor relations manager for Pacific Power and Light where he was involved in labor negotiations, among other activities.

After taking a well-deserved retirement, he didn’t settle into a rocking chair. He went back to school at the University of Wyoming and got a master’s degree in counseling and spent four years as a substance abuse counselor with the state prison system.

He and Deanna were asked by the Region to visit the Douglas church, 50 miles from their home in Casper, to help calm some dissension in the church, and he wound up pastoring ever since. He is an excellent preacher, peppering his sermons with some entertaining stories that make a point.

Fred is a true son of Wyoming. He is a devout follower of University of Wyoming sports teams, annually going to Las Vegas for the Mountain West basketball tournament. He loves to hunt and fish; in fact, when this is published, he will be in South Dakota hunting pheasants.

The American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains are blessed to have persons like Fred with pastoral gifts and pastoral hearts serving our churches.

*Bill Mankin
Ministry and Mission Coach
Wyoming Cluster*



*Fred and Deanna Dyer at their
50th wedding anniversary celebration in 2017*



Happy Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Observance

Count your blessings instead of your crosses;
 Count your gains instead of your losses.
 Count your joys instead of your woes;
 Count your friends instead of your foes.
 Count your smiles instead of your tears;
 Count your courage instead of your fears.
 Count your full years instead of your lean;
 Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.
 Count your health instead of your wealth;
 Count on God instead of yourself.

~~Author Unknown~~

Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, November 4. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour on Saturday night.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Region office will be closed November 12 in observance of Veteran's Day.

In observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday, your Region office will close at 12 noon on Wednesday, November 21. We will also be closed Thursday and Friday, November 22-23.

Your Region office will also be closed December 24 through January 1 for the Christmas and New Year Holiday Season.

Calendar

November

- 4 Daylight Savings Time Ends
set your clocks back one hour on Saturday night
- 4 Kimberly Salico-Deahl Installation
American Baptist Church, Fort Collins
- 8 Mission Committee Meeting
- 9-10 MLC Meeting
- 11 Veterans Day *(in observance, the Region office will be closed on Monday, November 12)*
- 13 Retired Clergy Luncheon
- 21-23 Thanksgiving Holiday Break
(the Region office will close at noon on Wednesday)
- 29 Executive Committee Meeting



December

- Retired Ministers and Missionaries Month
- 7 Denver Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 8 Wyoming Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 11 SE/NM Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 13 NFR Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 17 Western Slope Senior Pastors Christmas Party
- 24 Christmas Eve *(Region office closed)*
- 25 Christmas Day
(Region office closed)
- 26-Jan 1 Christmas / New Years Holiday Break *(Region office closed)*



**Veteran's Day
November 11, 2018**



**To all of our military, past and present,
THANK YOU for keeping us safe.**

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Steve Van Ostran
Executive Minister
svanostran@abcrm.org

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Send submissions to
akeys@abcrm.org*

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American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains
9085 E. Mineral Circle Suite 170
Centennial, CO 80112
Phone (303) 988-3900
Fax (303) 988-0620